

IV

STANDARD TESTS AS A TEACHING
DEVICE

As long as the chief emphasis in the use of tests was on measurement for comparative purposes they were a tool for the administrator or trained tester. With the shift of emphasis to diagnosis, the classroom teacher has become keenly interested. Diagnosis is well illustrated by the Cleveland Survey Arithmetic Tests¹. These tests are arranged in a spiral; that is, the addition tests begin with simple combinations, and gradually increase in difficulty until addition of fractions is reached. The teacher not only finds out whether or not her class reached the standard in addition: she sees their ability in the forty-five combinations, in carrying combinations over into decades, etc. So if the class is weak in addition she is able to focus her attention upon the weak spot, and thereby increase the efficiency of her drill. In like manner she has the abilities of the class in each of the other fundamental processes set before her. Or if she has measured the class with a Monroe Silent Reading Test² she not only sees the accomplishment of the class in comparison with a standard norm. She can see whether or not she should emphasize rate or comprehension, with the class as a whole, lie School Publishing Co. Price per hundred, 80 cents; sample set, 10 cents.

and with individual children. She can then group the children for reading according to their needs and by giving each group help at its place of weakness effect an economy of time. A program for increasing the efficiency of silent reading³ was published in *THE VIRGINIA TEACHER* for January, 1922.

Along with the use of tests for diagnosis has come the "campaign" idea. This has sprung up simultaneously in different parts of the country. In these campaigns the test is given, say, in arithmetic. The results are worked up carefully and put before the children. They are grouped for the drill work

according to their needs. The children are encouraged to devise schemes for remedying their own defects and often get so interested that they work outside of the regular class hours. The teacher attempts to give them some measure of their progress from day to day. For instance, class or individual graphs may be made to show how many addition problems are accomplished each day in five minutes. The work is often motivated by having two rooms compete, or two sections. But the one big motive is in the retest. The teacher has told them definitely that after their intensive work a second test will be made. In fact, one wonders if the first test is really worth very much to teacher or pupils without this second test to measure the results of the remedial work.

Last year one of the students teaching in our rural junior high school measured her seventh grade with the Cleveland Survey Test. She analyzed the results with the children, and they saw that their weakness was in the combinations. So the drill was centered there. The practise work was timed and graphs were made so that the children knew what they were accomplishing. After about two months the class was tested again. The median of the test involving combinations alone was raised from 17.5 for the first test to 31.5 for the second. In the other addition tests for which they had not been drilled—she had just 15 minutes a day for the practise work—the gain was negligible. A complete account⁴ of this campaign was given in *THE VIRGINIA TEACHER* for December, 1921.

This winter our third grade was given the Courtis Silent Reading Test⁵ Form 1. The class was trained intensively for a period of weeks in rapid silent reading. A record was kept for each child on certain days of the week showing how many words he read in a minute. This was made into a graph for each child. How they chattered as they gathered around in the morning comparing results! How enthusiastically they went at a certain piece of drill which they knew was intended to help that progress-line go up. Before the retest the class went through a rather unusual lot of material for

¹These tests may be secured from the Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Ill. Price per hundred, \$2.90, sample set, 10 cents.

²These tests may also be had from the Public School Publishing Co. Price per hundred, 80 cents; sample set, 10 cents.

³Saunders—A Revised Reading Program.

⁴Miller—The Use of Standard Arithmetic Tests.

⁵These tests may also be had from S. A. Courtis, Detroit, Michigan.

a third grade, some of it of fourth grade difficulty. A complete account of this campaign will appear in a later issue of the *TEACHER*.

Just at present our junior high school is in the midst of a punctuation campaign. The Briggs Form Test⁶, Alpha, was given in December. The results were tabulated for the children so that each child saw what his errors were and the frequency for each error. That is, he not only knew that the "comma before but" was his trouble, but he knew how many times he missed it. The children co-operated in drawing up plans for improvement, and standards for accuracy for each class. Then the drill work was centered upon the weak spots. After the retest an account of this campaign will appear in the *TEACHER*.

For some years the philosophers have been telling us that education was an active process; that the child could best educate himself. Not since the days when Plato stressed this doctrine has there been more urgent need of it than now. Our children are not disposed to lend themselves to the old text book teaching, nor should they be. But once they are interested, once they are fully aroused, there is practically no limit to the labor they are capable of. This campaign in one subject between tests enlists the active co-operation of the class; they get concerned about the errors in spelling or the initial capitals, or whatever it is. And when this concern is shifted from the teacher to the class—well, something surely is due to happen!

KATHERINE M. ANTHONY

"SOCIAL SERVANT"—ONE ENGAGED IN
SOCIAL SERVICE

I believe that every teacher should recognize the dignity of his calling; that he is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of proper social order and the securing of right social growth.—John Dewey.

⁶These tests may be had from the Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, N. Y. Price per hundred, 90 cents.

V

QUOTATION

FERMENT IN THE COLLEGES

According to the prevailing scheme in our institutions of higher learning the officially recognized interests of the students fall into two categories. The first of these consists of the "student activities," frequently designated in the college press simply as "activities." Athletics, class politics, debating and musical clubs, the conduct of the honor system, are typical "activities." The other category of interests has never, to our knowledge, been officially christened, but we suggest as most appropriate the name of "student passivities," or "passivities," for short. This category includes everything that has to do with the curriculum. How many years a student must spend in college, what courses shall be "required," and what they shall contain, how far election of courses shall be free and how far controlled by an advisor—all such concerns have by general consent been left to the governance of the Faculty. And the Faculty likes the arrangement. The Faculty stands in the position of a producer of utilities; the students are the consumers. And what do producers consider more fitting than that the consumer should leave to their discretion all questions of quantity, quality, and price?

Recently, however, there has appeared to be something like a ferment working in the colleges. At first only sporadic voices were heard challenging the eternal fitness of the division of interests between activities and passivities. The challengers were usually avoided, as cranks, by the majority of well disciplined students. These students did not believe that you could change student nature. They believed that it was of the nature of the student to present himself as raw material at the college gates, to be milled and sifted and done up in a neat parchment package according to the technical rules laid down by wise men long since dead and administered by other wise men not dead yet. But the number of challengers has grown persistently. The New York University News has compiled an "Intercollegiate Platform," a sort of students' constitution, from "planks" com-